

something that I don't think anyone would want to see. The presence of an AUMF provides a legal basis for holding these very dangerous combatants at Guantanamo Bay.

I think it could also affect our ongoing operations against terrorists throughout the globe, particularly our military operations, our special forces operations that are focused on terrorists connected to Al-Qaida, connected to ISIS, connected to those groups who have, over several administrations, been included within the scope of the AUMF.

To a point my colleagues have made, administrations going back to President George W. Bush, the Obama administration, and now the Trump administration—particularly in the case of the Obama and Bush administrations—have adjusted the AUMF to confront new circumstances, such as the rise of ISIS, et cetera. They have done so, though, in the context of a congressional statute, not because of the expansive power, under article II of the Constitution, of the President to defend the United States. One issue here is, again, do we want to put ourselves in the position where there is no governing law; rather it is simply that article II of the Constitution that provides the legal basis?

For many reasons, I hope we will think carefully about our role with respect to Senator PAUL's amendment. He has been tireless in his advocacy—"relentless," I think, is probably a better word. He is doing so with the utmost integrity and the utmost commitment to doing what he thinks is in the best interest of the United States.

I come here today to point out what I think our consequences would be, which would be very serious and very detrimental to ourselves, particularly our troops. I ask all of my colleagues to think clearly about what we are doing. We should and we must replace the AUMFs—both of them; however, until we have a replacement, we shouldn't create a 6-month period of uncertainty, doubt, and confusion. That is what it will be because it will affect our soldiers, our allies, and in some respects, give more leverage to our adversaries.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, in my absence today, I would like to note my

support for the confirmation of Mr. Kevin Hassett to be Chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers. Due to ongoing and urgent recovery efforts from Hurricane Irma, which finished its course through Florida only yesterday, and the lack of commercial air travel in the wake of this disaster, I am staying in my State to help coordinate and marshal the full capacity of recovery resources available to us.

Had I been able to attend today's vote, I would have voted in favor of Mr. Hassett's confirmation as Chairman.●

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for today's vote on Executive Calendar No. 110, Kevin Hassett to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for yesterday's vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 175, H.R. 2810, the National Defense Authorization Act. I would have voted yea.●

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 194 on the nomination of Kevin Allen Hassett, of Massachusetts, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.●

ABOLISH HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACT AND TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate this body on its passage of two important antitrafficking bills: the Abolish Human Trafficking Act and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

I am proud to have worked with Senators GRASSLEY, CORNYN, and KLOBUCHAR on these comprehensive bills and commend them and their staffs for the thoughtful and bipartisan manner in which they were drafted.

I would also like to thank the numerous law enforcement and antitrafficking organizations and, most importantly, the survivors, who have provided feedback and support throughout this process. It is my hope that the legislation passed last night will assist the tremendous work these groups do in the fight against human trafficking.

Both bills reauthorize a number of important programs that help victims and strengthen efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to human trafficking crimes.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which I authored with Senator GRASSLEY, promotes victim-centered training for school resource officers, judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement. It ensures that trafficking victims are properly screened and that more comprehensive data about trafficking crimes are collected.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act also includes one of my top priorities, which is to prevent the proliferation of trafficking offenses over the internet. I want to take a moment to discuss why I believe this to be a deeply important step in curtailing the criminal enterprise of trafficking.

The commercial sex industry is evolving. The use of the internet to sell commercial sex has escalated dramatically over the past several years.

Online platforms have provided an easily accessible and seemingly low-risk forum for buyers. In 2014, one website advertised nearly 12,000 advertisements for commercial sex in a single day.

Some of these sites have become hubs of human trafficking. Backpage.com, in particular, has been used to facilitate sex trafficking of minors for years. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has determined that Backpage.com is linked to 73 percent of all suspected child sex trafficking reports that it receives through its "CyberTipline."

Indeed, just a few months ago in my home State, a 3-month investigation into Backpage.com led the Stockton Police Department to discover eight victims being trafficked for sex in the area. Some of these girls were as young as 14 years old. San Joaquin District Attorney's Human Trafficking Task Force said that advertisements on Backpage.com offered sexual acts with the victims for as little as \$20.

Under current law, it is a criminal offense to knowingly advertise commercial sex acts with a minor. Backpage.com has repeatedly asserted that it has no involvement with the advertisements posted on its website. However, after a thorough review of Backpage.com's screening methods and practices regarding their advertisements, the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations concluded that Backpage.com knows that its website facilitates trafficking and knowingly concealed evidence of criminality by systematically editing its adult ads to help them avoid detection by law enforcement.

Shortly after these findings were publicly released, the Washington Post obtained documents that showed that contractors hired by Backpage.com were specifically instructed to solicit and create sex ads aggressively, including the posting of ads suggestive of sex with minors. In fact, these documents revealed that "invoices and call sheets indicate Backpage.com was pushing [the contractor] to get as many new listings as possible."

These revelations are deeply concerning, and I hope that they will be